Community & Discussion Guidelines

We're here to advocate for the collective voice and interests of our community to build a democratic, equitable MIT that lives up to our shared values. To do that, our internal structure must reflect our commitment to and vision for change. We strive to build a space which is proactively inclusive and welcoming to all students. We are committed to ongoing evaluation and reflection to ensure that our organization is accountable to our values.

1. Assume and act in good faith: Please try to speak from experience, speak for yourself, and actively listen to each other. If you are challenging someone's ideas or behavior, please do so respectfully, and if you are being challenged, receive it respectfully. Members have different levels of experience with the work we set out to do. We should aim to respect this diversity.

E.g. *There is a proposal raised before the OC by member X. Member Y thinks there is a major issue or oversight with this proposal. Acting in good faith would mean that Y is raising this issue because of the content of the proposal and not for any other interpersonal reasons. In a similar way X, in good faith, would receive this amendment as a valid concern to be considered instead of a personal attack. If a topic is very contentious, we recommend that we avoid impersonal digital communications, where conversations can quickly devolve into hostility, and to instead have a respectful discussion at in-person meetings.*

2. Respect everyone's time: This means we give others time to speak up and share their opinions. It also means we each ask ourselves if our contribution is productive for the conversation.

E.g. *X gets very enthusiastic when Y is talking and raises their hand to be on the stack right away. To respect everyone's time, waiting for the end Y's comment to know if their questions have been addressed and use snapping to approve any statement would be a better method.*

3. Know whether to "step up" or "step back": We aim to embrace and lift up the participation of members from more marginalized backgrounds. Step back to leave space for others to voice their opinions and feelings. Step up if you find yourself not talking.

E.g. *X has been researching and drafting a proposal and has brought it to present at the OC. X should know to step up to share their background and overview of the proposal.*

X should then step back to ensure an inclusive discussion and encourage those with new perspectives to contribute. Other members should then take the opportunity to step up to provide feedback from their perspective, regardless of their sense of their own expertise on the matter. All opinions are valued.

4. Do not speak while others are talking: Please signal to the stack-taker if you wish to speak.

5. Respect everyone's struggle: This means we listen to and give time of day to everything brought up in discussions.

6. Respect everyone's safety: We do not tolerate misogyny, racism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, or any other kind of charged chauvinism in this space.

7. Respect everyone's privacy: We must respect anybody's wishes to keep their statements confidential.

E.g. retaliation

8. Use accessible language: Be sure to clarify any acronyms or jargon you use to ensure that everyone can follow the conversation. Additionally, English is not the first language for a large portion of the graduate worker community. We must show respect for this by speaking clearly, avoiding overly complex language, and restating any points of confusion.

E.g. acronym or jargon

Original voted on 11/22/2019, passed 11Y/0N/0A.